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"Sometimes You Have To Be The Leader": A Minnesota Oral History On Fighting Sexual Exploitation

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Abstract

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Keywords

Minnesota, Minneapolis, sexual exploitation, history, oral history, prostitution, battering, domestic violence, rape, child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, movement

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“SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BE THE LEADER”: A MINNESOTA ORAL HISTORY ON FIGHTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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ABSTRACT

Prostitution survivor Trudee Able-Peterson used oral histories to research and document the efforts of women and men to respond to the sexual exploitation of women and children in Minnesota. Her findings illustrate the leadership needed to overcome centuries of commercial sexual exploitation to obtain a beginning societal response. Respondents indicated the importance of their interaction with pioneer leaders in other locales. Their comments also illustrate the many issues and challenges still facing the community.

KEYWORDS

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MANY PEOPLE involved in the anti-sex trafficking field know little about the history of sex trafficking or the movement against sexual exploitation. According to Connie Sponsler, an advocate for victims of domestic violence I interviewed, “People who are engaged now [in the anti-trafficking movement] think that trafficking started 15 years ago. It’s not their fault that they don’t know.” And efforts to combat it have been ongoing for decades. Many professionals now working in the field do not know anything about this. There are lessons to be learned both from the history of sex trafficking in Minnesota and efforts to eradicate it that should inform advocacy, policy, and services today. Through interviews I, a survivor of six-and-a-half years of prostitution, determined to study the history of how our anti-trafficking advocacy developed. (See the Appendix for a list of the women who were interviewed for this oral history.)

Sex trafficking has been a part of Minnesota history from the very beginning. The moment ships came to Minnesota’s northern shores to haul furs and ore, indigenous women were bought and sold for sex. Families—women and children—were not allowed in or around fur trade posts (Lynne, 1998). Thus, European males used First Nations women for sex. Some men took the women as “country wives,” only to tragically abandon them later when they left (Lynne, 1998).

Many years later the practice is unabated, especially in Duluth’s international port on Lake Superior, which is surrounded by low-income Native women on reservations. The stories go back over a hundred years. In northern Canada one whaling official became known as the “Kindergarten Captain” because of his practice of renting out native girls, 11-15 years old, between 1890 and 1908 (Fredston, 2001).

For decades, parties have been held on the ships. The young women, invited to attend, are not told they are expected to provide sexual services. And, after being plied with alcohol, the women wake up and are on their way to Thunder Bay (Canada), hearing they are about to be sold for sex. At a hearing in 2016 one family presented concerns about female relatives who disappeared after visiting the ships (Sullivan, 2016).

Yet, as late as the late 1990's there was still no response to sex trafficking in Minnesota. Since 1982 Minneapolis was the headquarters of the Evans family, who ran the largest juvenile prostitution business ever prosecuted at that time, trafficking girls and women to 24 states and several Canadian provinces (Rosario, 2010). Nothing was ever done in Minneapolis. It took a St. Louis law enforcement effort to persuade the federal prosecutors in Missouri to charge the members, and shut it down. As one individual I later interviewed, Emily Heumann, asked me, "What took so damn long?"

However, in the last two decades people have begun to change their attitudes about women in prostitution and have begun to want to help. This is real progress, and it is important to capture what has occurred. I wanted to document why and how this had changed. With a small grant from the University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center, I began research in April 2015, interviewing individuals who had been working to assist trafficking individuals through advocacy and services, including outreach, over several decades in Minnesota, some involved as long as 40 years ago. A total of 16 persons were interviewed, of whom three were survivors of prostitution. Interviewees are listed in the Appendix. As Connie Sponsler has remarked, "There are still people around who were there at the beginning that we can learn from." Their observations, although grounded in Minnesota, will be of interest to any individuals and groups seeking to end the exploitation in the sex trade industry.

As a survivor of prostitution, myself, I experienced complete indifference and many failures to provide needed assistance that kept me in the sex trade. So, first my story.

Before the Movement: My Early Life

I was born in Minot, North Dakota, 49 years after "Captain Kindergarten" was selling native children on Herschel Island. When I was growing up during the 1940's to the 60's in the United States, there was little awareness or knowledge about the plight of women and children who are sexually abused and exploited. Of course, there were the dirty jokes about them that men shared. There were good girls and bad girls, the Madonna/whore duality. As a child I was molested by a grandfather figure at age 11; numerous times between the ages of 11 and 14 by older male cousins; and at ages 12-13 by older male neighbors. Even though I was molested as a child and wore my abuse in a precocious way attracting the wrong attention from boys and men, I and we, all children and women, kept silent because we were told and we believed it was our fault.

Eventually, I ran away from my small Wisconsin town to Minneapolis and the road didn't get easier to travel. By age 20, in 1963, I had been married twice, once for two months and once for two years. Both marriages were abusive, though in different ways. With two children and no support, no high school diploma, I didn't have many good options. There were no battered women's programs in those days; there was no help, only judgment. Thus, began six years in "the life" for me. I was

used to being mauled and molested at jobs, sexually abused as a child and then in marriage. I was not whole; I was body parts. I was desperate to care for my children. Eventually, I ended up stripping at a downtown Minneapolis club. The environment and lifestyle are harmful to women, and of course, you're just a sex object, your body parts are making money, and you are often expected to turn tricks as part of the job; it is all prostitution. The club required us to wear little bunny costumes. I was constantly molested by male bosses and customers alike. It was "expected." You are a public commodity; your body doesn't belong to you. But I'd learned that as a child and then again in marriage.

When I grew up, the phrase, "She's just a girl," was often heard. It diminished all of us. We were inferior in our society. Women and girls were told they needed to please men; they were nothing without a man. We believed that then, we bought the stereotypes about us. This worked itself out in many ways, like not seeking higher education and settling for marriage. My mother knew I was working as a dancer/strip-ter. Her advice: "Find a rich man." She didn't say this because she wanted me to be a prostitute. It was her frame of reference for what women needed to do to be secure, like a trophy wife, although she wouldn't have known that phrase or even that concept.

After several hospitalizations for kidney and bladder disease, I lost my apartment several times. I'd get out of the hospital, pick up my toddlers from the babysitter and return to my current apartment to find the locks changed on the doors for non-payment of rent. We lost all of our things and I had to start over again and again.

When I was released from my final hospital stay, we had no place to go. I went to the Hennepin County courthouse welfare department and asked for help. We sat there all day that Friday; my children were hungry. At the end of the day, the welfare worker told me to come back on Monday. "Surely you know we can't process your paperwork in one day," she told me. I stood up and said to her, "It's people like you who make prostitutes out of women like me." Life and desperation groomed me for prostitution. Working in clubs wearing a bunny costume, it was never a matter *if* you were molested/assaulted sexually, it was just how many times a night. It was the perfect setting for being an object.

During the time I was in prostitution luckily the AIDS crisis wasn't yet present. My two abusive marriages had helped me to know a man was potentially dangerous. I would tell other women, "Don't go with that one, you could get hurt." I was always right in one way or other, what with violence, withholding the money you agreed to, or threatening you. I must have offended one of the customers in the strip club I worked in in some way, because one day there was a letter for me posted from California. Inside there were clippings of murdered prostitutes. That was terrorism.

People think prostitution is "easy money." It's not easy, it's fast money. There's a huge difference and fast money is very addictive. That's important when you consider those who are exiting out of the business. It's too easy to fall back on it when the transition doesn't provide the opportunities for livable income or the support needed.

I lost custody of my children to an abusive ex-husband shortly after my mother's death, and faced the darkest hours of my life. I rented a small room in downtown Minneapolis and turned just enough tricks to survive. I was lost in a

haze of pills and alcohol. I contemplated using heroin. I'm grateful that I was afraid of needles so I never went down that path. I continued to dance, went on the road, and finally said goodbye to the Midwest.

I moved to New York City, kidnapped my children, and started life all over again. Somehow, life did get better. I did return to prostitution a few times when things got rough in New York. Fast money is addictive. The transition out of "the life" may have to be taken in baby steps; it's difficult for people who haven't been through it to understand how long it will take and what's needed to exit and transition to a better life.

Eventually I found my life's purpose in working with street youth when I returned home to Minnesota in 1976. I volunteered doing street outreach with youth while I worked in a Chinese restaurant to pay the bills. The youth out there were where my passion and commitment were. I had no degrees other than the fact that I'd been there! If I could help one youth escape, it would be a beginning, it would be something. I understood them. I've stayed in the profession of youth work for 43 years. This work has taken me on many amazing journeys. I've worked in several different countries and with a variety of cultures. Unfortunately, children are for sale worldwide.

I returned to New York City in early 1977 and stayed many years. I got my first paid job working with street youth at Covenant House in New York City in 1977. I became a specialist case manager/counselor to prostituted youth. It was really wonderful because I had permission to take the kids out of shelter and do real things with them. We went to the movies, out to lunch, and under a stunning painting in one museum I sat on a bench with a 16-year old prostituted girl who spelled out the horror of her young life. The kids felt like they were real people and would remark on being treated as "normal human beings." So the fact that someone would go out in public with them meant so very much. One young woman found me 20 years later. She wanted me to know that she was well, lived in Florida, and she and her partner had a tech business. She remarked, "You took me out to lunch and did things together with me that meant so much!"

In 1984 I started the StreetWork Project for Victim's Services Agency (now New Horizons) in Times Square, New York City. This work became the core of me. While in New York I met many courageous feminist leaders while I was active in Women Against Pornography, including Dorchon Liedholdt and Andrea Dworkin. These women were very important role models in my development.

In 1981, I wrote the book *Children of the Evening* and travelled the country talking about my life in prostitution and the children and youth I worked with in Times Square, and on national television. I talked about sexual exploitation of boys and transgender youth who were involved as well. During one of my book tours, a memory that stands out for me was when I spoke at a small-town high school in Wisconsin to students during the day and to adults in the evening. I talked about my life, the sexual abuse in my childhood, and how I ended up in the sex trade industry. I learned that many of my childhood friends had been molested also. We never told. I was in my 40's at the time. At one school, I was signing books after I spoke and an elderly woman waited patiently in line. When she got to me, she said with quiet tears, "I've been waiting 72 years for someone to tell me it wasn't my fault." She was 76 years old. Carrying the guilt and shame all those years is a burden no one should face, ever!

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1970s- The Beginning of the Movement

The women's movement didn't do so well with intergenerational work. Young people grew up taking everything for granted. They didn't learn about the history of the movement and the price women paid. We need to figure out how to do a better job connecting generations as we move forward in our efforts for equality (Amy Kenzie, Minnesota Department of Health).

Child Abuse

It started with child abuse. While I found my passion for work during the early 1970's, women were beginning to speak out about child sexual abuse and their own experiences. Leaders of the movement such as Susan Brownmiller, Kathleen Barry, Andrea Dworkin, Kate Millett, Dorchen Leidholdt, Catharine MacKinnon, and Ellen Pence, to name a few, began speaking out and writing about sexual abuse and violence against women, battered women, pornography, and prostituted women and children.

The woman's movement and the battered women's movement are intricately tied to the movement against sexual violence and exploitation of women and children. The women who fought for social justice and safety for abused women witnessed firsthand that the women they were meeting in domestic violence shelters were also often sexually abused and exploited.

Survivors of abuse would not be kept quiet any longer.

The anti-violence movement started in the late 1960s when cities across the US developed specialized "child abuse teams." Ramsey County, Minnesota (St. Paul), developed its first community-wide team to address community needs of battered children at the Ramsey County Mental Health Center. The team first went to Denver to investigate its Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team to gather ideas. The professional team consisted of three pediatricians, a public health nurse, a police detective, three social workers, a psychologist, and a psychiatrist. Shirley Pierce was the team coordinator and Dr. Carolyn Levitt was on that team. These teams, which began to form across the country, were usually connected to hospitals. They were the forerunners who grappled with the hard issues of child abuse. Once child abuse was recognized it brought attention to child sexual abuse, which in turn shed light on children being bought and sold for sex, which today we term, "trafficking." Forty-eight years after the formation of that first child abuse team, Carolyn Levitt is the director of Midwest Children's Resource Center (MCRC), which serves several thousand abused children per year and has specific programs dealing with child sexual abuse and trafficking of children.

Rape

In 1971 or 1972 Minnesota opened one of the first rape counseling centers in the nation, led by Deborah Anderson. June Fleeson Sroufe volunteered at this center. June went to work with Deborah Anderson at the Hennepin County Attorney's office in 1975 in the newly created Sexual Assault Services Unit. Deborah and June, along with others, realized the laws needed to be changed to better prosecute perpetrators and protect women and youth. To achieve this goal, volunteers sought

out legislators who were willing to rewrite the sexual abuse laws to be more easily used for prosecution of the perpetrators. The word “rape” was removed from the statute, to broaden the law to better cover other crimes, and four degrees of criminal sexual conduct became the new standard. The county attorney at that time, Gary Flakne, was supportive of this effort and all the assistant county attorneys were trained to use the new laws. Indeed, the prosecution of sexual abuse cases increased 10-fold within two years in Hennepin County (Minneapolis).

According to Sroufe, public activism also changed police policies, such as evidence gathering in police procedures. Information would be gathered differently in hospitals, with patient sensitivity being emphasized, and rape kits being utilized with a formal procedure that gathered semen and blood specimens for evidence. Police were trained in these new procedures. If they were told it was a rape case, they were taught to be more sensitive and take it seriously.

Sroufe says a major goal was to help victims recover from the effects of an assault through support and advocacy. When a victim of a sexual assault came to the hospital, volunteers from the Rape Counseling Center were called. If the victimized person was agreeable, the advocate would be with her (him) through the exam and ensuing court process, to offer information and support. In cases where the victimized person did not go to the hospital, police often brought her (him) to Sexual Assault Services Unit for advocacy and support. Sroufe and her colleagues also did a great deal of community outreach and education, sometimes providing as many as 30 speeches a month to change social thinking about rape.

The Battered Women’s Movement in Minnesota

In 1975, Ellen Pence became active in the battered women’s movement, a place she called home for most of her life. In 1980, she and a small group of activists for battered women organized the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota, commonly known as the “Duluth Model.” The Duluth Model was an extraordinary undertaking that rightfully gained national and international accolades for fundamentally changing the way community institutions responded to gender-based crimes. Think back to a short generation ago. Prior to 1980, arrests for domestic assaults rarely took place, cases were unlikely to be prosecuted, and there were few consequences for violent offenders. Although Pence supported the safety that shelters provided, she knew they were just band aids. Pence asked why the state wasn’t assuming responsibility for ensuring that battered women were safe from violent boyfriends and husbands. She called out judges, prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, probation officers, and politicians to account for their failure to act while women in their community were being physically and sexually abused.

In 1976, the Harriet Tubman shelter for battered women opened in Minneapolis. At this time, women who were prostituted were not recognized as battered women. The prevailing attitude was that these women were making a choice to be prostitutes. The early philosophy of the shelters was that they were for women in intimate partner relationships, that is, married women. For a woman or youth who was prostituted, a relationship with a pimp or a buyer of sex was not considered to be an intimate partner relationship. There was much work still to be done.

In 1978 a survivor of prostitution named Del Marie (no one remembers her last name) began a new program working with a psychologist to serve women and girls in the sex industry called PRIDE (From Prostitution to Independence, Dignity and

Equality. The program was a hard sell to the agency and the community in the beginning. The intent was to empower individuals and staff to make systems changes, deal with legal and social disparities, help families overcome barriers, and create new opportunities for sexually exploited individuals and their families. PRIDE offered counseling and support groups, legal assistance and advocacy, resources and referrals. It worked primarily through the legal systems in the courts and the Women's Workhouse, a local prison.

In 1976 I returned to Minnesota from New York City and began to do outreach and counsel youth through the Hennepin County Attorney's Office Rape and Sexual Assault Division for June Fleeson-Sroufe, and then in collaboration with the newly formed Minneapolis Area Youth Diversion Project, founded by Nancy Hite, which focused on girls for sale in downtown Minneapolis. The organization eventually became what today is YouthLink, a multi-service center for homeless, unstably housed, and at-risk youth in downtown Minneapolis.

1980s-The Anti-Pornography and Anti-prostitution Movements

Leadership in changing social thinking about women, youth and children who have been prostituted in Minnesota began in the late 1970's.

Connie Sponsler said "It's important to understand how the issues came to be part of the battered women's movement in framing prostitution as violence against women and developing the analysis of the "institution" of buying and selling women, which is within patriarchy."

In 1983, the Minneapolis city government hired Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, two leading and powerful anti-rape thinkers and advocates, to draft an anti-pornography civil rights ordinance as an amendment to the Minneapolis civil rights ordinance. The amendment defined pornography as a civil rights violation against women and allowed women who claimed harm from pornography to sue the producers and distributors for damages in civil court. The law was passed twice by the Minneapolis City council, but vetoed by the mayor each time. Another version of the ordinance passed in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1984, but was ruled unconstitutional by the federal Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. MacKinnon and Dworkin continued to support the civil rights approach in their writing and activism, and supported anti-pornography feminists who organized later campaigns in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1985) and Bellingham, Washington (1988) to pass versions of the ordinance by voter initiative.

While some women became famous for their work, there were huge numbers of women across the nation and the globe who were getting together quietly and not so quietly in women's groups, talking about sexual and domestic abuse in childhood and in adult relationships. Some of these women admitted to have been forced by income need or coerced or forced by pimps to be prostituted. They were able to disclose because they felt safe...finally. These stories were not *Happy Hooker*, *Pretty Woman*, or *Mayflower Madam* stories.

During this time, Connie Sponsler was working at Harriet Tubman Shelter in Minneapolis and was a member of the Minnesota Battered Women's Coalition. She attended a workshop in the east and was drawn to a workshop that Evelina Giobbe, a prostitution survivor, was presenting titled, "Prostitution is Violence Against Women." That workshop had a deep impact on Connie. She had never equated prostitution as violence against women. It was an awakening.

Connie returned to Minnesota and began conversations with other women working with battered women. Denise Gamache was a colleague at the Minnesota Battered Women's Coalition. Denise raised funds to create a position in the movement for Evelina Giobbe and brought her to Minnesota. WHISPER (Women Hurt in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt) was founded. It was the first survivor leadership program in the Midwest and was located in the Powderhorn Park area, just off Lake Street in Minneapolis.

WHISPER was staffed by women who had been in prostitution and wanted to help other women exit street life and prostitution. Another WHISPER goal was to take on the issue of prostituted women's "right to safe shelter," which meant taking battered women's shelters to task for denying a prostituted woman shelter. At the time, the thinking was that battered women syndrome only existed in traditional relationships, like marriage. Prostituted women were still seen as "choosing" to live that life and their relationship with a pimp didn't qualify as a traditional relationship.

Connie Sponsler began working to change the culture and philosophical position at Harriet Tubman shelter to give prostituted women shelter. They are battered women too, she said. The Minnesota Battered Women's Coalition voted on a resolution stating that "intimate partner violence IS: a trick, a cop, a pimp, and so on." It was a debate about who is a partner. Rape lies at the core of prostitution. They questioned whether it was "just a job" or if women really had a choice. Sponsler said: "The first time I heard the phrase--women as victims in prostitution on television 20 years ago, I cried."

Connie developed training for battered women's shelters about sexually exploited women and began to bring the philosophy that prostitution was violence to shelters across the state. The only rule at Harriet Tubman House for women admitted to shelter who'd been prostituted was that they couldn't turn tricks while they were in shelter.

In 1986, the Children's Hospital Association's funded Dr. Levitt to be the Director of the Midwest Children's Resource Center (MCRC). She had been working on child abuse since the early 1970s. "Dr. Levitt had the courage to bring child abuse to the forefront by establishing the MCRC. By doing so, she has saved countless children here and throughout the country. Her clinic is the Gold Standard which other clinics are measured," said Laurel Edinburgh.

Connie Sponsler said: "It's important to understand how the issues came to be part of the battered women's movement in framing prostitution as violence against women and developing the analysis of the "institution" of buying and selling women, which is within patriarchy. There was a groundswell that developed out of the work of Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin connecting rape crisis center and domestic violence work. They established a knowledge base and working together made further connections between incest, sexual assault, rape, prostitution and domestic violence."

1990s-Bridge Years: A Coming Together of Ideas and Movements

In the 1990s legislators became more interested in hearing about sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.

In 1990 I was invited to speak to a congressional committee on violence against women in Washington, D.C. chaired by Senator Joseph Biden, along with Virginia

Price from The Bridge program in Boston, MA. We told committee members that if they didn't fund street outreach, they wouldn't get to the most vulnerable street children who were victims of violence and sexual assault every hour of every day. The Violence Against Women Act, which passed in 1994, did eventually create a separate funding stream for street outreach through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act already in place.

In the early 1990s, support for WHISPER waned due to some fiscal issues. A former staff member of WHISPER, Vednita Carter, also a survivor, was determined to create another program to assist women. She founded Breaking Free in 1996 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Breaking Free was able to gain funding to create housing for women, critical to being successful in leaving "the life."

Today, every year, Breaking Free, under the leadership of Theresa Forliti, helps an average of 400-500 women and girls escape systems of prostitution and sexual exploitation through advocacy, direct services, housing, and education. Their main offices are located in St. Paul, Minnesota, with branch offices in Rochester and Minneapolis. Breaking Free's doors are open to women and girls throughout Minnesota and the United States.

Street and community-based outreach played a key role in identifying and locating trafficked and exploited youth. In 1994 the StreetWorks Collaborative was formed. Karen Trondson, who was a case manager for a youth services agency, Freeport West, Inc. attended a conference in Washington, D.C., and a workshop given by Jerry T. Fest. Jerry worked with Janus Youth Programs/The Yellow Brick Road in Portland, Oregon, and talked about a small collaborative formed there to do street outreach to homeless youth.

When she returned to Minnesota, Karen sat down with seven agency representatives including Connie Sponsler and Susan Phillips from Lutheran Social Services, and an outreach collaborative was formed. Although there was some outreach to youth occurring already, it wasn't coordinated, but loosely organized with one outreach worker from an agency, another from a different agency, so it didn't provide an accurate enough picture of homeless youth. With seven agencies working together, more outreach workers were hired. Some of those outreach workers specialized in working with prostituted youth, including doing strip club outreach.

These youth have fallen through the cracks...it just isn't right or fair-plus they are just the best-I love them! They are strong, insightful, and resilient, and have taught e and inspired me more than anyone knows! (Beth-Holger-Ambrose, Executive Director, The Link).

At the time the collaborative formed there was still a lot of visible street prostitution, particularly heavy in downtown Minneapolis in the near south and north sides and in the mid-south areas of eastern Minneapolis. There was particularly a lot of activity near the underpass of the highway and where there is heavy traffic on main routes. These are poor areas of the city with businesses that come and go quickly. The work became more difficult with the advent of cell phone use and Internet sites like Craigslist and Backpage, but today outreach workers can still find women and youth engaging in prostitution on the street, particularly on Lake Street near the freeway underpass, on Bloomington and Lake, in the Powderhorn Park area, and downtown Minneapolis.

By the end of the 1990s, connections between sexual violence, battering, and prostitution were starting to be realized. People in public health recognized the parallels between choices about prostitution and battering: both involved choices, some women went to prostitution, forced or not, and some women married batterers, said Amy Kenzie.

2000's – Research and Professionalization of the Movement

In 2001 Laurel Edinburg attended the ongoing Child Abuse Team meeting and met Emily Heumann from Ramsey County's Sexual Offence Services' (SOS) Sexual Violence Program, and Kate Richtman from the Ramsey County attorney's office. Laurel was seeing cases of sexually exploited children in her nursing capacity and had no place to refer them after their initial exams. At that time, Child Protective Services did not take the cases if the children were adolescents. Laurel said she was frustrated and discussed the issues with Emily Heumann and Kate Richtman. Kate wanted to change the culture in her work group and view these issues through a different lens. Emily was seeing sexual exploitation happening to the battered women and teens that SOS served. They asked each other, "What can we do about it?"

The group in Ramsey County made me believe that if we collectively use our powers for good change can happen" (Emily Heumann).

Laurel Edinburg (2006) began a study of the runaway youth she was seeing who were sexually abused. She began seeing an increasing number of very young Hmong girls (an ethnic group in east and Southeast Asia) ages 10-14, who were referred to MCRC. In her study, she compared the incidence and severity of violence in different cultures. Edinburg found that Hmong girl assault experiences were markedly more severe than their peers. She concluded that health care providers needed appropriate knowledge of Hmong culture in order to conduct forensic interviews. Also, the abused Hmong girls needed culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate after-care that helps connect them back with families and school.

Edinburg began working with the Hmong American Partnership and the Hmong Youth Task Force. At one meeting she attended, she was deeply moved by a Hmong father who remarked, "Nobody is looking for our girls." Lieutenant Lynch, a St. Paul police officer, was there, and apologized to the father. Laurel has said, "It was powerful and poignant and true."

During this time, Laurel met Elizabeth Saewyk, a registered nurse from Canada who conducted research with many different groups of vulnerable adolescents, including runaway and street-involved youth, sexually abused and sexually exploited teens, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender adolescents, youth in custody, immigrants, home-stay students, refugees, and indigenous youth from several countries. Laurel said the conversations with Saewyk opened her eyes to the fact that the children she was seeing were trafficked children.

Researches and Options for Youth Project (ROY), developed in Ramsey County (St. Paul) was formed to deal with youth who were chronic runaways, made an impact. Next step was to create the Runaway Intervention Program (RIP) to locate missing youth from Ramsey County, both in Minnesota and in other states.

The first task was to locate funding for a Runaway Intervention Program (RIP) that would allow follow up care for sexually exploited children. In 2005, Laurel was able to obtain a small grant, \$20,000 from the Children's Hospital Association. This grant allowed Laurel to do home visits and follow-up on care for children and youth. She was the only one doing the work at this point. Laurel was able to provide health education, reproductive health care, and even connected some of the youth to jobs. Laurel and Lieutenant Tim Lynch discussed the RIP program and Lieutenant Lynch assigned two St. Paul police officers, Benny Williams and Chris Stark, to work with the RIP program. Benny and Chris located runaways in several other states utilizing social media and excellent police work. As not all runaways ended up in prostitution, there were distinctions of what kind of services youth needed.

This beginning led to Laurel Edinburgh, (MWCRC) Emily Heumann (Ramsey County Sexual Offense Services) and Kathryn Richtman (Ramsey County Attorney's Office) working to change legislation and obtain funding for Safe Harbors for Youth Intervention Program (SHYIP).

In 2005 there was article in the *Star Tribune* by reporter Pam Louwagie about trafficking of Hmong children by reporter. This article brought public attention to the issue. Legislator Phyllis Kahn from Minneapolis saw the article and called Kate Richtman at the Ramsey County Attorney's office. Phyllis worked with Senator Sandy Pappas and Representative Michael Paymer. The legislature voted to give \$98,000 to Partners for Violence Prevention/Anita Berg to develop a cross-discipline protocol approach in identifying and working with youth who were homeless and being trafficked.

In September of 2006 I was invited to the first SHYIP meeting in St. Paul. There were over a hundred people there, and I couldn't believe it! People who attended were from so many disciplines that I almost wept with gratitude. Finally...people across so many disciplines cared enough about the plight of children I'd worked with for 30 years, to actually do something, to change laws, to make a difference. The next three years in working with this intersectional committee were a joy for me.

Those original hundred people dwindled down to about 40 consistent members of SHYIP with many others coming and going in the next three years.

In May 2006, the Minnesota Legislature passed a supplemental appropriations bill (S.F.2915) granting Ramsey County funds to implement the Safe Harbors Youth Intervention Project (SHYIP), a pilot project to address the needs of sexually exploited youth. The target population included homeless, runaway or truant youth in Ramsey County who has been sexually exploited. Senator Sandy Pappas, Representative Phyllis Kahn and Representative Michael Paymer have been staunch supporters in our efforts to gain funding for the work.

The purpose of SHYIP was to initiate and promote closer coordination and better communication among all agencies to improve services for the target population. Agencies included County criminal justice, human service and public health departments, social services, schools, law enforcement agencies and healthcare providers. SHYIP focused on intervention and prevention methods (protocols) as identified by this multi-disciplinary collaborative and was to be used as a model for implementation across the state. SHYP was the precursor to the Safe Harbor legislation (see below).

The SHYIP protocol is modeled on the work of the Ramsey County Adult Sexual Assault Response Protocol initiated in 1997. The adult protocol is a very successful collaboration of many organizations that focuses on victim-centered approaches to sexual assault response. The adult protocol handbook is used throughout Ramsey County and has become a model for other communities across the country. Laurel and Tim Lynch from the St. Paul Police Department developed the 10-question tool to be used by first responders to determine if a youth is a) homeless and b) sexually exploited.

Suzanne Koeplinger also noticed the same trends of violence and sexual exploitation among native women and youth. She said she was following international news and legal changes on sex trafficking. She talked to one woman who told me she'd been sold at age 12. She realized this is NOT prostitution, it's trafficking! The woman had been a victim of a federal crime and she was being punished as a criminal by being arrested as a prostituted woman.

When in 2007 Suzanne Koeplinger did a presentation in Duluth the police were glad, because no one had believed that there was trafficking to the ships in the port. There were young teens being trafficked to the ships. Some people said, "This is just your theory." Koeplinger then got a grant from the Kellogg Foundation in 2008 and hired researcher Alexandra Pierce, to do a study, which is called *Shattered Hearts*, (2009). This powerful study details the devastation trafficking has had on Native American women, children and families through centuries of exploitation.

Suzanne Koeplinger testified at the White House twice at the Office of Victims of Crime. She said that until we published "Shattered Hearts" people didn't know what was happening, and there hadn't been any funds to help the women and children.

Researchers became key leaders. They did research so that all of us can understand the issues and what needs to be done to stop sexual violence and violation of women, youth and children. These research projects have made huge progress in discovering the realities, educating all of us, and have had a deep impact in moving forward to eradicate this horrific crime. See Table 1 for a list of notable research projects on prostitution and trafficking in Minnesota.

Law Enforcement

As more professionals moved into the movement, they took their lead from victim programs, human rights organizations, and some law enforcement personnel. They responded in new ways. Minnesota does excellent law enforcement. They have done things in different ways, and it has had an effect.

Indeed, law enforcement became allies in the movement. One leader was Danette Buskovic, a law enforcement professional. I asked her how she became involved. She said that leaders were the beginning advocates for human rights like the Family Partnership, Breaking Free, Beth Holger Ambrose, the Civil Society, Officer John Vandemer, Gerald Vick, and Ray Gainey, officers who were doing things in law enforcement that hadn't been done before. "The Office of Justice Programs was a leader in letting me do this work. Representatives in our office saw the bigger picture and allowed resources to be available that weren't there. They paid for advocacy and sexual assault and juvenile justice worked together like, Jeff Bauer, Kate Richtman, Dave Pinto, and John Choi."

I feel incredibly honored to have been a part of the early discussions and reporting on sexual and labor exploitation from a statewide perspective (Danette Buskovic).

Table 1: Notable Research Projects on Prostitution and Trafficking in Minnesota

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1999 | <i>The Hofstede Committee Report: Juvenile Prostitution in Minnesota.</i> Chairperson, Al Hofstede. Committee Members: Vednita Carter, Breaking Free, Errin Determan, PRIDE, Beth Jacobs, Breaking Free, Katie Miller, Project Offstreets, Gail Patterson, Breaking Free, Suzanne Peterson, PRIDE, Alesia Pettiford, PRIDE, Connie Skillingstad, Catholic Charities, <u>Father Larry Snyder</u> , <u>Catholic Charities</u> |
| 2004 | <i>Advocacy on Behalf of Women Used in Prostitution: A Handbook for Rural Advocates.</i> Praxis International. Connie Sponsler |
| 2005, 2006, & 2010 | <i>Human Trafficking in Minnesota: Report to Minnesota Legislature,</i> Minnesota Office of Justice Programs, Minnesota Statistical Analysis Center |
| 2007 | <i>The Prostitution Project: Community Based Research in Sex Trafficking in North Minneapolis,</i> L. Martin. |
| 2008 | <i>Sex Trafficking Needs Assessment for the State of Minnesota: The Advocates for Human Rights,</i> Minneapolis. A. Bortel, M. Ellingen, M. C. Ellison, R. Phillips, and C. Thomas |
| 2009 | <i>Shattered Hearts: The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Indian Women and Girls in Minnesota,</i> Alexandra Pierce, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center |
| 2010 | <i>Adolescent Girls in the Minnesota Sex Trade,</i> The Shapiro Group |
| 2011 | <i>The Garden of Truth: The Prostitution and Trafficking of Native Women in Minnesota,</i> Christine Stark. Funded by The Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition in Duluth. |
| 2013 | <i>Early Intervention to Avoid Sex Trading and Trafficking of Minnesota's Female Youth, A Benefit Cost Analysis.</i> L. Martin and R. Lotspeich |
| 2014 | <i>Mapping the Market with Trafficked Minor Girls in Minneapolis: Structures, Functions and Patterns.</i> L. Martin and A. Pierce |

Another leader in law enforcement was Sgt. Grant Snyder who became the first Hennepin County police officer to work solely on cases of juveniles who were exploited in prostitution. Officer Grant's philosophy was "to get the kids to safety." He wanted to punish the perpetrators and hold them accountable for what they've done to children, but his first goal was to get the children to a safe place. Sgt. Snyder worked with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension on cases and was incredibly busy in those days, which was good. This meant that this issue was finally seeing the light of day and children and youth have a chance to be located and offered a safe place to heal.

There were real strides in the movement when the economic downturn happened and funders said you must collaborate, document and report in more meaningful ways and think in collaborative ways. However, a lot of people were quietly working with trafficked individuals for many years and that should be noted, not just the people in front of the camera says interviewee Artika Roller.

The Researches and Options for Youth Project (ROY) developed in Ramsey County, which dealt with youth who were chronic runaways, made an impact. Also the Runaway Intervention Program (RIP) who located missing youth from Ramsey County, both in Minnesota and in other states with which police officers Benny Williams and Chris Stark worked, meant that Kate Richtman with the Ramsey County attorney's office finally had a place to which refer missing youth cases, which wasn't there before.

Institutionalizing Anti-Trafficking: The Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force

In 2006, legislation establishing the Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force passed, established to end human trafficking through a coordinated, multidisciplinary, state-wide response. The Task Force is comprised of governmental and non-governmental agencies, with leadership from a multi-disciplinary steering committee. Seven committees work on specific areas of the state-wide response. As a result of its efforts, amendments strengthening Minnesota's sex trafficking legislation have been passed, enabling law enforcement to better hold perpetrators accountable. These included laws to strengthen Minnesota's sex trafficking legislation, enabling law enforcement to better hold perpetrators accountable. In 2008, Advocates for Human Rights, at the request of the task force, published a needs assessment for the state, evaluating the current system of response and making recommendations for change. See Table 2 for a timeline of the anti-sexual exploitation movement in Minnesota since 2000.

One of the most important laws was the Safe Harbor law, passed in 2011, with amendments in 2014. This law excluded sexually exploited youth under age 16 from the definition of delinquent child; and those under age 16 could not be charged with a crime for prostitution-related offenses. The law was later (2013) expanded to include youth under age 18. The law also increased penalties against facilitators of commercial sexual exploitation of youth as well as customers, and required that revenue from additional fines be distributed to local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies to support training and to further combat sexual exploitation, and to victim services agencies to support survivors. Lastly, the law mandated a state service model called No Wrong Door, responsible for establishing housing and shelter, comprehensive services, and training and protocol development. Appropriations have enabled six transitional living residences in the state for exploited youth up to 18 years of age. "With the new Safe Harbor Law the time is ripe for exploring where we are and how we got there and interest is great in some circles," said Pam De Witt Meza. Pam continued, "It's interesting because it shows a change in systems, but also the culture of violence against women and children. It encompasses all varieties of models and strategies which includes grass roots lobbying and mobilizing."

Table 2: Timeline for Anti-Sexual Exploitation Movement in Minnesota Since 2000

| | |
|------|---|
| 2005 | The first anti-trafficking laws were passed in Minnesota |
| 2006 | The state legislation established the Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force to advise the commissioner of public safety on how to address the issue of human trafficking in Minnesota. The Task Force is comprised of governmental and non-governmental members. |
| 2007 | The Legislation establishing the Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force is passed. |
| 2008 | The Advocates for Human Rights, at the request of Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force, published <i>The Sex Trafficking Needs Assessment for the State of Minnesota</i> , evaluating the current system of response and made recommendations for change. |
| 2009 | Amendments are passed that strengthen Minnesota's sex trafficking legislation, enabling law enforcement to better hold perpetrators accountable. |
| 2010 | The Advocates for Human Rights received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs to develop and implement training for county attorneys on how to use the new law, and The Minnesota Women's Foundation launched the <i>Minnesota Girls Are Not For Sale</i> Campaign. |
| 2011 | Minnesota passed the Safe Harbors for Sexually Exploited Youth law which includes protections for children who are commercially sexually exploited and clarifies that sexually exploited children are crime victims, not criminals. The law will go into effect August 2014 |
| 2012 | The Safe Harbor Working Group develops the <i>No Wrong Door Model</i> for serving sexually exploited youth. |
| 2013 | The Minnesota State Legislature designated \$2.8 million dollars to fund part of the No Wrong Door model that will effectively respond to sexually exploited youth in the state. Amendments to the Safe Harbors for Sexually Exploited Youth law passed, extending Safe Harbor provisions to all youth under the age of 18. |
| 2014 | Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force named "Organization of The Year" by the Minnesota Women's Consortium. |
| 2014 | Shelter, transitional living, navigators and training for police, and other first responders. 2.2. million additional dollars are allocated to increase services, but funding for street outreach diminished by a half million dollars. |
| 2015 | Funding for Safe Harbor. |

Current Challenges

Those interviewed expressed a variety of current challenges, not all of which involve the difficulties in understanding and implementing new laws and programs. These are discussed here.

Media

The media's lurid and insensitive approach to prostitution needs reformation.

We need to hold the media accountable for the language they use, that is, "child prostitute, "teen hooker." Laurel Edinburgh noted that a lot of media coverage has either been salacious or exploitive of survivors and victims. At first our organization shunned all media, but then we developed relationships with some reporters. So journalists we worked with were more informed and educated. More recently there have been more op-eds about the work we do and the real lives of women and children we work with and the reality of violence, exploitation and abuse in their lives.

Emily Heumann commented that when New York Governor Elliot Spitzer was found to have used high-priced "escorts," spending \$80,000 in a six-month period, night show host David Letterman used the word "whore" for the 22-year-old woman during his "comedy monologues."

The song, "It's Hard Out There for a Pimp," performed at the 2006 Academy Awards, actually won the trophy for the most original song. Voters apparently didn't find the song unacceptable.

A great deal of time the language used by the media is "offensive and inappropriate. Danette Buskovic thinks it's important that we educate the media and do more connecting with them."

The language used is important. The change in our response to those exploited and met with violence has occurred because we have now understood them to be victims of exploitation. Others will see the light if the language reflects this. A recent example: An Iowa farmer was offered a teen for sex not once, not twice, but three times by an oil industry representative as payment for installing pipeline through his land. He reported it, but the media still called her a "teen sex worker" and a "teen hooker," not an abused child, failing to note that if a 46-year-old man has sex with a young teen, it is called rape.

Women's Attitudes

Many interviewees noted the need for women to be aware of how they categorize other women. Historically, one interviewee said, there has been a Madonna-whore division between women. Women in prostitution were viewed as making a choice, and they were bad. If women are judging and sorting women and girls, no progress can be made. We needed all women to stand with us. Today women from all walks of life are supporting women and children more aggressively. Church groups are emerging to support and not judge women and children who have been trafficked. There is a new dawn of seeing victimization in a new light.

Women also need to be aware of current culture pressure.

The whole strip club world! There is such proliferation of these clubs, 18 of them in near downtown where it's mostly contained. People become more desensitized to boundaries of bodies, and it's more socially acceptable to publicize body parts. Women are also patronizing strip clubs; it's seen as a social activity. It was considered a dirty old man thing in the past, now, Monica Nilsson notes that it's becoming normalized on television and other media.

Men's Attitudes

"We need men to take this on. We need unlikely allies such as police, prosecutors, non-social service people, elected officials, the media, and men without obvious interest in this issue, like sports figures," explained Monica Nilsson.

But convincing men is complex.

One interviewee said that men have difficulty approaching the problem through the issue of gender equity. "Women need to partner with men and develop some narrative that we can use, so men can develop, hone it, and make it their own to talk with other men so that it's meaningful and must be culturally sensitive. Gender equity isn't the way that some men may be able to have that conversation."

Others saw a need to focus on perpetrators of the exploitation.

While there are pedophiles who only want children under 10, I'm more interested in the mainstream guys who want 12 to 30-year-olds. They feel an entitlement, are emotionally and socially immature, can't have an adult relationship, and feel less threatened by a 16-year-old. Monica Nilsson believes that some men can't relate to women who aren't submissive to them.

We can't put focus only on victims and survivors and not enough on perpetrators. We need to challenge that status quo and talk to the guy who is in line to rape the 14-year-old. We must insist on focusing on perpetrators.

Chris Stark says that, "There is still an unwillingness to hold the perpetrators accountable unless they're African American males in most instances. We have to go after white middle- and upper-class males or nothing will change. We have to go after the center of the power.

In general, many interviewees stated that social change will not happen until we end the objectification of women and the beliefs of men that they are entitled to secure women's bodies. Economic disparity in the U.S. creates a large group of individuals who can be preyed on by traffickers and pimps. Connie Sponsler said, "Poverty impacts how susceptible one is to prostitution." And Chris Stark added that "Without economic and gender equality we will continue to fight the uphill battle.

Lack of Services

Leaders thought there still needed to be more, and higher quality services. Lack of funding, and lack of training of those providing the services continue to be problems. There were also concerns about where some of the money is going:

Emily Heumann asks what is the whole philosophy of the institution receiving funds? Are they educating their staff regarding victims of violence against women, children, and youth? Do they have a philosophy of a service approach? Is their staffing the youngest and least experienced, because they don't have to pay them as much?

Concern was voiced about professionalizing the work, meaning that a certain dimension can now be missing from service provision:

Chris Stark believes there is a lack of passion, willingness to be confrontational when we need to be. By asking for funds from the state legislature and other institutions how do you think that impact the willingness of the movement to expose institutional collaboration and white middle-class males who are perpetrators?

What you have then is a continuation of the criminal justice system that operates along racial and class lines. It further perpetuates the myths around prostitution and trafficking that it's African American males on street corners who run the show, when we know it's white men and corporations who make millions of dollars off of it. We need an understanding and analysis of the structure and politics and power that they hold.

Along these lines, some interviewees believe there should be caution in regard for requests for funds from the legislature. Danette Buskovic said, "Overexposure to the legislature makes them weary of our 'asks.'" She continues, "We have to 'slow our roll' and get Safe Harbor right.

Artika Roller said that there are a lot of people working on this issue, but not enough funding. And it is important that sexual assault services dollars shouldn't impact funding for trafficking and vice versa. One shouldn't be at the expense of the other.

Training remains a problem, said Pam de Witt Meza. "It takes a lot of time for people to really get it. The SARS Team, (nurses providing rape examinations) they get a training and act like they get it, but as a case would be presented and it (trafficking) wasn't identified. People are interested, but it takes a lot of time and repetition.

Laurel Edinburgh said that training needs are overwhelming. Police officers, prosecutors, criminal justice people, nurses, judges, physicians, all need training.

Coordination also is a large problem, with so many individuals and agencies involved. Amy Kenzie said, "There needs to be a three-pronged approach: service response, systems response, and prevention response. We need coordination so we don't have a lot of loose cannons."

Engaging and serving people of color

Although there is a recognition of the problem in communities of color, they have lacked the wherewithal to deal with the issue:

There's a long way to go for communities of color. According to Danette Buskovic, the African American and Native American have recognized this as a problem for a long time, but had no platform to fight it as historically marginalized groups. We must not do anything further to marginalize people. We must make sure we have representatives among survivors, ethnic, and LGBTQ people. We have to be open to changing our minds, engaging and working with communities of color is integral to our success.

Learning from History

Several interviewees asked why no action was taken when the Evans Family came to everyone's attention in the early 90's, and why people began to step up later. What were the conditions that made this possible? The answers, presented below, are instructive.

Lack of understanding

One interviewee explained that you have to see exploitation as the problem: "When foundational needs are not met, we label people, you're a drunk, you're a prostitute, and it's your problem. But it's really a result of lack of care for traumatized people."

Others said it was a lack of understanding of history. There is a need to know long this has been a problem in order to understand it and its structural causes.

A true understanding of the problem requires involvement with survivors, which hasn't happened enough. Chris Stark remarked that "Survivors are not the center of our current work." The current #MeToo movement has shown the power of survivor testimony.

But most fundamentally, time and time again, progress was due to true leadership. Many times in this narrative, someone went to a conference and heard a speaker, the lightbulb went off, and she or he went back home and started doing things. Registered nurse Pam De Witt Meza describes the process:

In 2011 I had a personal encounter with a young person outside of her home, young woman running one night, looked in rough shape, high, black eye. Can I help, what's going on? This young girl was running from a car, and was in obvious distress and needed help. She didn't have a phone and asked if she could use mine. She was trying to get to McDonalds' are on Lake. I asked her if I could call the police to help her, but she said she had warrants out on her and didn't want the police involved, she was high also. She finally did call the police but then took off. I felt horrible, because I didn't know how to help. The next morning I called Breaking Free and asked, "If this happens again, how can I help?...I wanted to know what language to use to help, about resources, including culturally specific resources. I approached the hospital, but they didn't want to get involved, I felt we needed to be "armed up" in medical systems to help. I started getting education on the issues, went to conferences, read materials and talked to others. *Sometimes you have to become the leader.*

According to Pam De Witt Meza, the ingredients are all here. A meeting with the victim. Awareness of insufficient response and resources. Another person stepping up to be a leader.

We may be at the crossroads. "What we've done collectively in Minnesota is really quite remarkable. There are requests for education, training, and skill building. People want answers about how to work with trafficked women, youth, and children" says Suzanne Koeplinger.

CONCLUSION: LEARNING FROM HISTORY

At age 75, I'm reflecting on my experience in prostitution as I interview others, some survivors, and some who have joined us in the war against exploitation. Sometimes for me it's seeing through the glass darkly that many of us who are survivor leaders haven't been recognized, compensated, or valued for the grass roots work we accomplished that brought us here. Other times I'm excited that women and men who have not had those experiences truly want to help make changes for women, youth, and children to end this horrifying abuse.

I can't help but wonder if there had been shelters for youth, and programs like Safe harbor in place when I started running away in 1957, what might have happened in my life? It was so easy for girls to slide through the cracks into a black and bleak hole of our society. The men were there creating lots of opportunities for us to be For Sale, but assistance was not available.

It's a struggle for me to understand some young feminists who have not had "lived experience" in prostitution who believe that sex work" is a choice. It hurts my soul. My "choice" of survival/prostitution was formed by the exploitation I experienced in childhood and youth and by circumstances I found myself in after abusive marriages that further convinced me I was body parts.

I feel good to be a part of the history of the change in attitudes about this power differential of men over women and youth when they have cash in their pockets, power, and plenty of excuses to buy/rent sacred places in women, youth, and children. But there is so much work that still needs to be done. Survivors must have more options at any age, survivors must be compensated for their work, and allies need to grasp the difficulty of transition/exit for children, youth, and women. So I roll up these aging sleeves and wade in...again.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Trudee Able-Peterson has 43 years' experience in the field of youth services as a direct care provider, program developer, trainer, consultant, and administrator. In 1984, she developed the first street outreach project (The Streetwork Project) to sexually exploited homeless youth program in New York, in Times Square. She has worked as a national consultant and development coordinator for new street outreach programs funded by Federal Youth Services Bureau, and was the project coordinator for the Empire State Coalition in Region II to develop street outreach programming in rural, suburban, and small urban cities in New York State from 1990-1994. She has worked as an international consultant in 12 countries for street outreach to exploited children and youth. She is currently an independent consultant working with youth outreach programs, focusing on boundaries and ethics and sexually exploited youth outreach.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEWEES

Danette Buskovic is the Policy, Planning and Evaluation Manager for the Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Pam De Witt Meza is a registered nurse, currently working in a new integrative health clinic treating individuals with addiction in an outpatient setting.

Laurel Edinburgh is the Associate Director of the Midwest Children's Resource Center, Children's Hospital of Minnesota.

Emily Heumann is the Program Supervisor, at the SOS Sexual Violence Services, St. Paul Ramsey County Public Health.

Beth Holger-Ambrose is the Executive Director of the Link, which provides housing and resources for homeless and exploited youth.

Lynn Jacobson is a former outreach worker.

Amy Kenzie is the Sexual Violence Prevention Program Director, Minnesota Department of Health.

Dorchen Leidholdt is a leader in the movement to end gender-based violence since the late 1970's. She is director of the Center for Battered Women's Legal Services at Sanctuary for Families in New York City, the largest dedicated legal services program for survivors of gender violence in the country.

Mary Jo Meuleners, MPH, MSW, is a program manager for children's services in Hennepin County Health and Human Services. She developed outreach services to women in strip clubs.

Suzanne Koeplinger is the Director of the Catalyst Initiative, The Minneapolis Foundation.

Monica Nilsson has led street outreach and emergency shelter programs serving unaccompanied youth and adults in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Kate Richtman is the Director of the Juvenile Division, Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

Artika Roller is the former director, P.R.I. D. E., assisting women and youth exiting prostitution.

Connie Sponsler works with victims of domestic violence.

Chris Stark is a writer, researcher, organizer, and visual artist.

June Fleeson Sroufe is a retired child psychologist, who has worked at the Rape Counseling Center and the Hennepin County Attorney's Office.